





THE ACTOR



Faithfully yours
William Winter.

THE ACTOR

AND OTHER SPEECHES

CHIEFLY ON THEATRICAL SUBJECTS
AND OCCASIONS

BY

WILLIAM WINTER



NEW-YORK
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1891



TO

ELLEN TERRY,

REMEMBERING GREAT KINDNESS IN DARK
DAYS, AND WITH GRATITUDE FOR MUCH HAP-
PINESS, BESTOWED EQUALLY BY HER GENTLE
FRIENDSHIP AND HER ILLUSTRIOUS GENIUS,

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK,

WHICH, BEARING HUMBLE TRIBUTE TO THE
GREATEST ACTRESS OF THE AGE, WILL DE-
RIVE WORTH AND DIGNITY FROM ASSOCIATION
WITH HER LOVED AND HONORED NAME.

WILLIAM WINTER.

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*“In praising Amoret we cannot err :
No tongue o'ervalues heaven, or flatters her!”*

Preface.

IT has been my fortune, more by chance than by design, to deliver many speeches and poems on dramatic and other occasions. Many of those speeches were extemporeaneous, and as they were not reported they perished as soon as they were spoken. One of them, an oration on "The Press and the Stage," was delivered before The Goethe Society, at the Brunswick Hotel, New-York, January 28, 1889, and it has been published in a separate volume. In compliance with the request of comrades in The Dunlap Society a few of the others are brought together here. The longest and most important of them relates to "The Actor, and His Duty to His Time." This was read before a large assemblage of actors, at Palmer's Theater, and as it contains unwelcome truths it was received partly with approval and partly with disfavor. An ex-governor of Massachusetts, commenting upon it, has kindly explained that the admitted evils under which American civilization unde-

niably suffers, and which have injuriously affected the American stage, are due to inordinate rapidity in the advancement of art and science among the American people. My readers will, no doubt, be as much cheered as I was by that sagacious and patriotic explanation. The companion speeches, having been carefully thought out, were partly improvised and partly spoken from memory. The poems that I have delivered on dramatic occasions will be found in the edition of my writings,—including “Wanderers,” “Shakspeare’s England,” and “Gray Days and Gold,”—published by David Douglas, of Edinburgh, and Macmillan, of New-York.

W. W.

*Fort Hill,
New Brighton, Staten Island,
June 19, 1891.*



CONTENTS.

THE ACTOR. THE ACTOR AND HIS DUTY TO HIS TIME	1
THE CRITIC	26
THE COMEDIAN. A TRIBUTE TO LESTER WAL- LACK	35
SIR PERCEVAL. A TRIBUTE TO LESTER WALLACK	42
THE COMRADE. AMERICAN AND ENGLISH FEL- LOWSHIP IN ART	44
THE TRAGEDIAN. A TRIBUTE TO EDWIN BOOTH	52
THE POET	57
THE JOURNALIST. A TRIBUTE TO WHITELAW REID	62
THE FRIEND. EULOGY UPON HENRY EDWARDS	75

The Actor

AND OTHER SPEECHES.

The Actor.

THE ACTOR AND HIS DUTY TO HIS TIME.

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE
ACTORS' FUND SOCIETY, AT PALMER'S THEATER, N. Y.
JUNE 4, 1889.

IT is an honorable privilege as well as a great pleasure to share in the proceedings of this delightful occasion. Dull indeed would be the spirit that could not be impressed by the intrinsic loveliness and the artistic meaning of this imposing scene; by the presence of this remarkable assemblage, remarkable equally for genius, intellect, beauty, sensibility, noble achievement, exalted character, and auspicious promise; and by conscious and thrilling perception of that noble and beautiful art, the art of acting, of which this assemblage is the visible sign. (Once again is exemplified here the puissant and perpetual charm of the stage, its ever-changing but never-dying sway over the fickle multitude, whereby an actor's prosperity is obtained and assured, and its placid dominion, held as with a scepter of roses, over the educated mind, the refined taste, the

comprehending spirit, the adequate and responsive heart, whereby an actor's fame is clearly defined and permanently established.) Back of this occasion stand the prosperity and renown of the American drama. There are observers who always take a despondent view of the condition of our theater. In each succeeding period of dramatic history contemporary writers are found who declare that the stage is in a decline and is much inferior to what it was in earlier and better days. No doubt its condition has always fluctuated, and no doubt in this respect the future will resemble the past. But there never was any warrant for the proclamation of a hopeless theatrical decline. Such lamentations have always proceeded from idealists. Their error consists in the wrong custom of judging exclusively by the standard of the scholar and the man of taste an institution that can only exist when it is made to please and satisfy many classes of people. We do not take the opinion of the multitude upon such a subject, for example, as the poetry of Shelley or the painting of Murillo; but to a certain judicious and well-considered extent we must take it upon the question of the acted drama. It is the presence of this element which has inspired a long line of Jeremiahs in their irrational moans over the alleged fatal degradation of the drama. If there was an audience for the flippant levity of Foote and the bovine drollery of Tate Wilkinson, there was also an audience for the aerial intellect, the glittering comedy, the tragic fire, and the exquisite pathos of Garrick. The horse-dramas that were shown at Drury Lane in the palmy days did not finally invali-

date the sovereignty of Mrs. Siddons or the glory of her companion monarchs, the princes of the proud house of Kemble. Edmund Kean held his scepter notwithstanding "Catalini's pantaloons." The same journals of the passing hour that record a long and remunerative currency for The Parlor Match, or The Kitchen Poker, or The Old Hen-Coop, or The Hole in Uncle John's Sunday Breeches must also record that Edwin Booth is sometimes paid ten thousand dollars for one week of his Shaksperian acting; that Joseph Jefferson finds throughout America a practical response for dramatic art as perfect in form as even the best of exigent Paris, and refined with a poetic spirituality to which the stage of Paris is a stranger; that Mary Anderson acts for a whole season to crowded houses at the London Lyceum Theater in a Shaksperian comedy; that Henry Irving and Ellen Terry have had three long seasons of splendid prosperity upon the American stage, giving only plays of the highest order, and giving them only in the best manner; that under the management of Albert M. Palmer a single good play, in three seasons out of five, runs through the whole of a theatrical year in New York; that Ada Rehan, playing Shakspere's *Shrew*, has been as eagerly accepted as ever Peg Woffington was in *Wildair* or Louisa Nisbett in *Rosalind*; and that Augustin Daly not long ago obtained a brilliant career of nearly fourscore nights for that most delicate and evanescent of dramatic compositions, "A Midsummer Night's Dream." It is true that in the present period, which is one of turbulent democratic upheaval, the social cauldron is boiling with such furious impetu-

osity that the dregs often come to the surface and for a while remain there. It is true that a potential factor in contemporary civilization is mediocrity, and that under the influence of that malign and stupefying force venerable and noble ideas are for a while discarded or modified. But when allowance has been made for every qualification it remains a truth that the stage was never so great or so powerful in this republic as it is to-day, and never before so capable of wielding a superb influence upon the advancement of society.

The word that ought to be spoken here and now is, nevertheless, a word of warning. In the period of nearly thirty years during which I have been a continuous writer about the stage it has seldom been my fortune to write anything that was intended specially for actors. My writings have been intended for the public, and they have been prompted and guided by an ardent desire to broaden and deepen a thoughtful public interest in the stage. There are many and various benefits to be derived by the community from an appreciative and sympathetic intimacy with the art of acting, and with dramatic literature; and it seems to me that the duty of a theatrical essayist is to indicate what and where those benefits are, and to urge and entice the people to obtain them. Many other views are taken of the vocation of criticism, but this will be found a practical and useful one. Every effort is propitious for the general welfare which tends to dignify the popular estimate of the theater; for (it should never be forgotten that an institution, like an individual, may be prominent and influential without

being either rightly understood or properly respected. In John Gay's comedy of "Three Hours after Marriage" it is said that "a parrot and a player can both utter human sounds, but we allow neither of them to be a judge of wit." The old view of the stage—much as the stage was followed and enjoyed—is often a blandly tolerant and half-contemptuous view. To adjust that mistaken estimate—which is still extant—to assist in the education of public opinion respecting the intellectual aspects of the acted drama is a worthy mission for a theatrical writer. He mistakes his function when he assumes the attitude of an instructor to the players. He should no more undertake to teach an actor the art of acting than he should undertake to teach a doctor the science of medicine or to teach a lawyer the science of law. In addressing my observations to you, the representatives and guardians of the acted drama, I am speaking not as an instructor but as an observer stationed in the outer circle of theatrical affairs. Great and potent as the stage now is in America, it is not as beneficent as it ought to be, and therefore a word of warning may properly be spoken with reference to the duty of the actor to his time.

The period of national development through which we are passing is strongly marked by two characteristics—cynical levity and a studious but insincere and unscrupulous consideration of popular caprice. Almost everybody makes light of almost everything. The young people, upon whom modesty would sit with so much grace and sweetness, are too often

"smart" and pert. Their elders, whom charity and gentleness should adorn with cheerful composure, are too often fretful and harsh with distrust and sarcasm. No historic career, no personal character, no principle of action, no occurrence of life is so serious that it cannot be made the subject of a jest. Slang is printed in almost every newspaper and spoken in almost every drawing-room. The mind of the nation is tinged with a jocose and vulgar humor, and the voice of the nation is raucous with a rude hilarity. You may hear, indeed, if you will pause to listen, the hum of industry, the fine poetic murmur of reverence and aspiration, and faint and far away the gentle note of worship, the mellow music of the bells of God; but the prevalent and almost the overwhelming sound is the sound of the guffaw. Beneath this boisterous joviality there is a spirit—not universal, but widely diffused—of crafty and sordid selfishness. The tone of our politics is mercenary and mean. Accepted, practised, and approved methods of our business partake of an indirection which certainly is incompatible with a fine sense of honor. Agnosticism has so shaken the fabric not merely of creeds (which can well be spared, and which are destined to perish) but of spiritual faith and love, that to thousands of persons religion, ceasing to be a refuge and an anchor, has become merely a fashion of vacant ceremonial. In many directions luxury is rampant, and in all directions it is passionately desired. The mood of the populace (notwithstanding the awful admonitory fact that the American republic had not existed one hundred years before it was convulsed by

the most hideous civil war of which history makes any record) is a mood of vainglorious complacency ; and in this the people are stimulated to the utmost by the American press. We hear continually of the *rights* of man but almost never of his *duties*. Foreign elements, seditious, boisterous, dangerous, actively pernicious in many ways, and made potential through abuse of the suffrage, largely affect or entirely control the disposition of our practical affairs. Public office, the chief object of political intrigue, and not infrequently made a commodity for barter and sale, is often perverted in its functions and disgraced in its incumbents. An insane greed for sudden wealth startles the observer by its prevalence and its rapacity. Youth is trained to acquire the rewards of industry and enterprise, not by prudent, patient, and continuous toil, but by craft or the strong hand. Manners — the final and perfect flower of noble character and a fine civilization — are so completely overwhelmed by violent and boisterous vulgarity and insensate hardness that they can scarcely be said to exist ; while refinement, which is the essential comfort and charm, and which ought to be prized and guarded as the crown and consummate glory of social life, is oppressed and insulted at every turn. Haste and strife, flurry and racket convulse the towns and madden the population. Men and women are hustled and packed into the public conveyances as if they were cattle in a pen. The sanctity of the individual is not merely disregarded, it is unknown. Reckless newspapers print whatever they please, and the honest man, bemired by their abuse, who proceeds

against any of them for libel is ridiculed as an over-sensitive fool. The book-stalls teem with fiction that is either erotic delirium or sentimental rubbish. Thirty-five years ago a woman was thought to be courageous who dared to read the novel of "Jane Eyre." Today the loathsome feculence and hideous moral leprosy of the novels of Émile Zola may be seen in public places, borne in the hands even of young girls. The spectacles that are still admired as architecture elude specification and are indeed too terrible for words. The sounds to which we listen unmoved would deafen or would destroy any other people outside of China or Madagascar. The morning, noonday, and evening steam-whistle rising from a thousand able-bodied boilers; the intermittent tooting of a hundred aerial locomotives; the clank and rattle of incessant railway trains in the air and tramway cars in the shattered and jagged streets; the pounding of heavy trucks over broken pavements; the clangor of dissonant church bells; the strident blast of the ubiquitous and incessant hand-organ; and the rasping yell of the licensed vendor—they are all here: so that often, after listening for a day and a night to the infernal din of this capital, I think that New York has become what the great orator Rufus Choate declared Boston Common would become if ever the occupation of it should be granted to the acquisitive desire of the Providence Railway Company. "At present," he said, "it is a peaceful pleasure-ground, wherein your citizens can walk abroad and recreate themselves. Grant it to this corporation, and what follows? Ætna—Vesuvius—Stromboli—Cotopaxi—Hell."

The sentiment of patriotism is a noble and lovely sentiment, but it cannot be nurtured by self-deception. Undoubtedly the shield has two sides. There are great and auspicious elements in our civilization, and since the web and woof of our time are woven of various colors the fabric shows bright as well as dark. The beautiful observation of Charles Reade is as true of our people as it is of any other: "Not a day passes over the earth but men and women of no note do great deeds, speak great words, and suffer noble sorrows." If it were not so the battle would be lost already, and further struggle would be useless. But these things that I have named exist, and they indicate a tendency in the drift of our time—by no means historically new, but as dangerous as ever—against which every intellectual force of the age, either directly or indirectly, ought to be arrayed.

(There are two institutions which, beyond all others, indicate the condition of the public mind, and which, equally beyond all others, affect its tone and influence its movement. Those two institutions are the newspaper and the stage.) The supreme and universal rulers of human conduct are woman, vanity, money, political ambition, and religious fanaticism; but among specific social forces the newspaper and the stage transcend all others in their reflex bearing and their direct power upon the community; and for that reason a greater responsibility rests upon them than upon any of their associate forces, with reference to the intellectual, moral, and spiritual advancement of the human race. Each stands in the same environment and each is confronted by the same problem. When your existence

depends upon a perfectly harmonious adjustment of yourself to the needs and the pleasures of the people, to how great an extent will you defer to the drift of the popular mood? For you who are actors and managers, and therefore the representatives and guardians of the acted drama, the question is a vital one. Your temptation is to fool "the many-headed beast" to the top of his bent; and thereupon your danger is, in the fierce strife of competitive endeavor and under the imperative need of instant success, that you will end by surrendering your authority altogether into the hands of the mob. To some extent, within the last thirty years, that surrender has already been made. It is about the period of one generation now since Dion Boucicault made the first specimen of the "Sensation Drama" and invented and proclaimed that epithet to designate a new school of art. Next came the lascivious charm and wanton allurement of the Opéra Bouffe, embodied in Tostée and conducted by Bateman. Rapidly after that the semi-nude burlesque was enthroned, with Lydia Thompson for its empress and Samuel Colville for its prophet; while William Wheatley, with the glittering spectacle of the "Black Crook," revived and implanted upon the American stage the same voluptuous and mischievous pageantry that Sir William Davenant, two hundred and fifty years ago, conveyed into London from the theater of France. Then for a while the drift was in favor of tainted French dramas on the everlasting theme of incontinence in the state of marriage. Sentimental farces followed, and after them the deluge. Of late the current runs to horse-play and the "real

tubs" of Mr. Crummles, and the enraptured multitude is thrilled to behold an actual woman swimming in an actual tank of water, or an actual fire-engine dragged across the stage almost as swiftly as it can be dragged in the street, and with almost as much racket. These are some of the results of an uncompromising submission to the popular lead, which almost always is ignoble, irrational, casual, and wrong. In this submission many of the newspapers of America have set a pernicious and deplorable example; but this fact, while it makes the duty of the actor to his time more arduous, should also make it more evident and more imperative. That duty is to check and withstand as much as possible the gross, leveling, degrading influences of excessive democracy,—which tend to blight everything with the baleful tyranny of the commonplace,—and to instil, to protect, and to maintain purity, sweetness, and refinement in our feelings, our manners, our language, and our national character. The common precept, the precept of the shopkeeper in dramatic art, is spoken every day: "Give them what they want." The higher and better precept, the precept of the moralist, would enjoin you to "give them what they ought to have." Which is the better counsel? and to which of these voices will you listen? (The welfare of the people in every age is committed as a sacred trust to the best intellect of the time.) A part of that responsibility rests on you, and it can only be evaded by the sacrifice of the institution that is your life. If the shopkeeping spirit is permitted absolutely to prevail, if you yield more and more and more to the caprice of the thought-

less multitude, while you will not destroy the stage (because the art of acting is immortal), you will help to bring upon it another blight of decrepitude, another season of dullness and decay, such as followed the orgies of the Restoration in England toward the end of the seventeenth century, or such as attended the general collapse of dramatic art in America about sixty years ago. *Vulgus vult decipi : decipiatur!* That was the haughty, unsympathetic, contemptuous doctrine of ancient cynical philosophy ("the common people like to be fooled: fooled let them be"), and under its malign influence, the few taking heed only of themselves and leaving the many to folly and riot, the great Roman Empire slowly crumbled into pieces like a moth-eaten garment. Surely for you, the leaders of thought in your domain, there is a nobler principle than that old Latin sneer. In the lofty elegiac lines that Matthew Arnold wrote upon the tomb of his illustrious father in Rugby Chapel none is more touching or more significant than the proud and tender exclamation, "Thou, my father, wouldest not be saved alone." While the late Lord Beaconsfield — a great man — was Prime Minister of England, every essential measure of national policy, it is said, was originated and prompted by him; yet in every case its inception and pursuance appeared to have been suggested to him by her Majesty Queen Victoria. It is within your province undoubtedly, in dealing with the sovereign people, to give them what they want; but it is within the power of your intellect, your knowledge of human nature and of the world, your wisdom and dexterity and tact, to make them

want what they ought to have, and to make them think, when you provide it, that they have asked you to do so. This is the duty of the actor to his time—and his duty is likewise his interest.)

The stage has generally needed popular support, but it has never prospered under popular dominion. In Greece, for example, nearly twenty-three hundred years ago, when the theater established by Æschylus and nurtured by Pericles had reached and passed its highest phase, there came that memorable period of popular license and misrule when the multitude had supreme power over the state and when the idol of the multitude was the ribald Aristophanes. You are familiar with the hideous and pathetic story of the persecution and murder of Socrates. The "Clouds" and the "Birds" have survived to our day, and it is easy to perceive at once their caustic wit and their pernicious influence. Sophocles and Euripides were derided. Everything venerable and noble was covered with ridicule. The reputation of individuals was assailed without truth or mercy and defamed without humanity or limit. The peace of families was ruthlessly destroyed. The very magistrates who sanctioned the appearance of the comedians were publicly lampooned and insulted. The gods themselves were flouted. The mob had what it wanted, and the theater became a mere conduit for comic libel and vulgar mirth, while dramatic art was submerged in ribald licentiousness and scurrilous indecency. To such a depth indeed was the Grecian stage degraded by this supremacy of the popular taste, misled by a brilliantly wicked humorist, that even the

transcendent genius of Menander, rising in the next age, could scarcely redeem it from settled ignominy and disgrace. In Italy, where the dramatic revival began in the thirteenth and culminated in the fifteenth century, there came a season of democratic experiment and disorder about the middle of the seventeenth, when the theater was left unprotected to the popular caprice; and from that time onward for fifty years nothing was seen upon it but coarse Spanish farces—the paltry one-act buffooneries with which the Spanish stage began but which in that period it had outgrown. Kindred illustrations might readily be drawn from the history of the theater in France and England. Look into the lives of Fleury and Macklin and Fennell and Edmund Kean; look into Jackson's account of the Scottish stage and Hitchcock's account of the stage in Ireland, and your righteous indignation is more than once aroused at the spectacle of popular tyranny overriding and degrading the stage. On the other hand, the best periods in the history of the drama have been those periods when it has been closely affiliated with the highest, because the ablest and most refined, classes of intellectual society—for these could guide and stimulate and govern its powers and its beauties, and, by the force of fashion and example, could lead the multitude in their train. The Shaksperian audience was an audience that would listen to poetry, and was capable of understanding and appreciating great and beautiful things. In that fertile and sumptuous period of English dramatic literature extending from 1580 to 1640 it accepted and

enjoyed not only the incomparable grandeur, beauty, and truth of Shakspere, but the stormy splendor of Marlowe, the funeral pomp and somber pageantry of Webster, the lovely simplicity of Heywood, the passion and pathos of Ford, the indolent, affluent grace and music of Dekker, the strong thought and trenchant and vibrant verse of Massinger, the noble repose and copious emotion of Middleton, and, above all, the wonderful feeling, depth, eloquence, variety, and loveliness of Beaumont and Fletcher. No such body of literature had been created before, and nothing like it has been created since. Creative art, indeed, is in no sense a result of environment: its impulse proceeds out of the great central heart of Nature. But in those "spacious days of great Elizabeth" the plays were not only written—they were acted and received. They had a public. The stage flourished because the finest intelligence and feeling in the English nation fostered and guarded it, and the multitude was lifted to the level of Spenser and Sidney and Raleigh—

"Of those great spirits who went down like suns
And left upon the mountain-tops of death
A light that made them lovely."

Upon that high level the people do not habitually stand, and it would be folly to assume that they do. (But there are noble elements and grand possibilities in human nature; to that high level the people can be lifted, and it is the duty of every intellectual man, and therefore of the actor, to lead them upward. Much is accomplished when the stage is made and

kept important—as Edwin Booth and Henry Irving and Augustin Daly and Albert M. Palmer and Lawrence Barrett have made and kept it—in the esteem of the best contemporary minds. Every student of its history knows that it has always been a thing of moods, now exalted and now depressed, but of late years, when viewed apart from all parasitic entertainments, steadily in the ascendant. The time was when the wise and gentle Charles Lamb expressed a mild astonishment that a person capable of remembering and repeating the words of Shakspere should for that reason be supposed to possess a mind congenial with that of the poet. Such an idea surprises nobody now. (Modern thought has recognized that the actor is a mental and spiritual force; that he is intimately connected with the cause of public education; that he is not a parrot and not simply an interpreter; that he brings something of his own; that although the poet provides the soul it is the actor who must provide the body; and that without having the body as well as the soul you cannot have dramatic representations or the benefit of the dramatic art.) This righteous illumination of modern thought, however, with reference to the profession of acting is not yet absolutely complete. The fact that the stage now stands upon the same level with the other learned professions has not yet become permanently imbedded in the spontaneous convictions of society. Little denotements frequently occur that the ultra-respectable and conventional mind of our time is still disturbed and twisted upon this subject. Bigotry dies hard. In 1832 the Harrisburg

clergyman who read the burial service over the remains of Joseph Jefferson, the great comedian of that period (an actor as noble and famous as his illustrious and beloved descendant in our generation), altered the text of that service so as to say "this man" instead of "our deceased brother" in the sentence which commits the body to the ground. In 1870 the Rev. Mr. Sabine, of New York, refused to open his church for the funeral of that venerated actor George Holland; bestowing as he did so, by a single fortunate phrase, a permanent honor upon "the little church around the corner," and making it possible for me to originate the movement known as the Holland Benefit. In 1883 a minister of the gospel in New Jersey publicly stigmatized a French actress, then in America, as being "as vile a hag as the sewers of Paris ever spewed into the state-room of an Atlantic steamship"—hags always coming out of sewers and the sewage system of the French capital being directly connected with ocean travel. Clarendon, the old historian, said that "clergymen understand the least, and take the worst measure of human affairs, of all mankind who can read and write"; and perhaps you will think there is occasionally some ground for his extreme opinion. In this year 1889 the amiable and admirable Quaker poet John G. Whittier, in a published letter, wonders whether Mrs. Langtry entertains as strong an objection to an author as he does to an actress. The incisive and trenchant writer of "*Obiter Dicta*"—one of the few contemporary books of real literature, rich in vital thought and therefore destined

to survive—dismisses the profession of the actor with a civil sneer. Some of my valued friends among the scholars of this period, reading those volumes of "Brief Chronicles" in which I have endeavored to commemorate many of the actors of the last thirty years, have expressed to me their gentle wonder that so much labor should have been expended on such insignificant persons. These are trifles; but all along the current of human life trifles disclose the involuntary views of mankind. These signs, and others like them, indicate that the ancient spirit of commingled bigotry and condescension toward the theatre, while it is dying away, is not yet dead. Seven hundred years ago, when the modern dramatic movement began in Italy and in England with the Miracle Plays, the clergy themselves were frequently the actors; and perhaps the church has not yet forgiven the regular dramatic profession for having invaded that field and confiscated its forces and its fruits. In every period possibly—in recent times certainly—men of ability and acquirements in other walks of life have been made uncomfortable by the rapid rise, the opulent prosperity, and the dazzling renown of actors. Dr. Johnson, beside whom David Garrick, who had been his schoolboy, remained a schoolboy to the last, possessed no such brilliancy of reputation in his period, and has descended in no such picturesque splendor of fame to ours, as that which David Garrick obtained and transmitted. Lowell and Holmes and Bancroft, as men of letters, have done a work of more radical and abiding value for the public than that of Jefferson or Booth;

but the prevalent sentiment toward Lowell and Holmes and Bancroft is cold respect in comparison with the fervor of enthusiasm that stirs in the American heart for Jefferson and Booth. There is no reputation in mighty London at this moment so brilliant as that of Henry Irving; and this is not confined to the capital, for when, as it happened last summer, we were walking over the lonely hills of remote Westmoreland, the passengers upon every carriage that chanced to pass took off their hats to him and often cheered him by name. It is natural that "your royal preparation" should somewhat annoy the doctor of divinity and the man of science and letters. Oliver Goldsmith, it is said, was displeased because the people in somebody's drawing-room, preferring female beauty to poetical genius, looked at the lovely Horneck girls instead of looking at him. This mild competitive resentment of your ascendancy, however, is superficial, transient, and ultimately ineffective. The essential vitality of the remnant of respectable aversion to the actor still extant consists in his faults and is fed by his errors. He has allowed himself sometimes to trifle with his vocation, and in the pursuit and practical administration of the theater he does not always sufficiently assert the dignity and weight of intellectual character.

The popular drift of the day, as I have stated, sets in the direction of jocose levity and cynical sarcasm. This note, in its proper time, place, and proportion, is amusing and perhaps salutary, but it may readily become immoderate, and when it is permitted in any

way to detract from the dignity of a great institution — when the professors of the stage themselves employ it to undermine and enfeeble their authority — it becomes a pernicious one. The Greek farce-writer Philemon died of laughter at seeing a jackass eat figs. Appetite is perennial, and the jackass continues his ministrations — only the laughing Philemon does not die. He gets his guffaw, and it agrees with him, and under its clodpoll influence he grows grosser and coarser and commoner day by day. In other words, there is a porcine taste for indelicate buffoonery, and in the practical, shop-keeping cultivation of this popular appetite a most inordinate prominence has been given to vulgar varieties and to burlesque. No one begrudges to the burlesquers all the remuneration to which their trivial proceedings may be entitled ; but at present the interest of the stage and of society needs their repression. They are excessive. All trifling with serious things has a direct tendency to lower them in the esteem of the multitude, by nature trivial, desultory, and capricious. The art of acting is the living soul of the theater as an institution, and by heaping upon that noble art an almost illimitable burden of elaborate silliness these burlesquers have done much to obscure the luster of the theater and in part to sequester it from the sympathy and respect of hundreds of the best minds of the age. A little frolic does well; but rank foolishness, in the various garbs of farcical mummary, slang, indelicate display of the female person, and vacant antic and babble have been carried far and tolerated long. The representatives

of this rubbish, indeed, do not now scruple to assert themselves as artists, and there is such a phalanx of them that in some parts of America nothing but "leg-business" is offered upon the stage, whence mind and beauty and refinement, crystallized in dramatic art, were long since banished. This is nothing less than a calamity. "It is not, nor it cannot come to, good." Theatrical entertainment, indeed, must take many forms, and burlesque can be treated as a fine art; but considering how it is treated, and remembering its natural tendency, every friend of the theater must deplore its dominion. (Greek art, which was perfect art (save that it lacked the ideal expressed in the character and conduct of Jesus), was informed by one supreme, inexorable, triumphant principle, never to be forgotten or neglected : *nothing in excess*.

Conduct is character, expressed under the pressure of circumstances. The flippant manner goes with the flimsy mind. Dignity is repose. It is the dignity of the dramatic character that must be trusted to sustain the power and augment the renown of the dramatic profession. That dignity I have always asserted and it is no spirit of detraction that leads me now to urge that actors ought to be stern critics of themselves; that they ought to give little or no attention to what is said about them in print; and that they would enhance the importance of their calling in the public esteem by a severe reticence with reference to their personal affairs. When one of the admirers of Wellington told him that he was equally great as a statesman and a soldier the Iron Duke replied: "I am glad that there

is no one to hear you say this, for I would not have any one think me such a fool as to believe it." The man who is thus a stern critic of himself is neither to be misled nor wounded by the observations of others. To a character like that, self-poised, simple, and sincere, critical commentary naturally appears like what for the most part it is—the buzzing of flies in the air. The actor is necessarily sensitive; but inordinate sensibility is a misfortune, and to shield himself from stupidity and malice, to maintain his repose, and to assert his power, he must wear the armor of a cheerful philosophy. There is a wise passage in the *Spectator*, wherein Addison has paraphrased and applied the excellent counsel of Epictetus: "When I hear of a satirical speech or writing that is aimed at me, I examine my own heart whether I deserve it or not. If I bring in a verdict against myself I endeavor to rectify my conduct for the future in those particulars which have drawn the censure upon me; but if the whole invective be grounded upon a falsehood I trouble myself no further about it and look upon my name at the head of it to signify no more than one of those fictitious names made use of by an author to introduce an imaginary character. This is a piece of fortitude which every one owes to his own innocence." Let me add that it is a piece of fortitude which, amid flippancy and chatter, every one owes to his self-respect. With the practical adoption of that philosophy by actors, with the abatement of undue solicitude as to the frivolous babble of the hour, much that belittles the stage and makes it still seem subservient,

paltry, and incidental in the judgment of some of the best minds of the age, will disappear. The torrent of gossip which is now a curse will run dry, and the actress who is constantly losing her diamonds, and the handsome actor who is continually bewitching her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales will be heard of no more.

And so I end as I began, the advocate of the intellectual principle, which alone can crown a perfect civilization with the white lilies of dignity and refinement. Our republic has been more than abundantly favored with material prosperity; yet it cannot be truthfully denied that as a people we are still deficient in gentleness and grace. That way lies our need, and in that direction it is time that we should make ourselves capable of practical fidelity to the highest ideal. As much of heaven is visible as we have eyes to see. All the forces of spiritual culture are within us. In the development of those forces the actor can accomplish a great work; and surely there is something more involved in his noble vocation than that one man should display talent and another man should praise it. (The capacity to reveal universal human nature, helping man to understand himself, is the justification of the actor.) (His faculties are not necessarily more important or more brilliant than those of other intellectual men; but the medium that Nature has provided for their expression is to the majority of persons more sympathetic, alluring, and delightful than any other form of utterance in the world.) More than ever in the movement of human affairs, accordingly, the attention

of the people is fixed upon the actor; and more than ever is it essential that he should know, and feel, and remember that he is the representative and guardian of a beautiful art and not simply the keeper of a shop.)

It was once my privilege, toward the end of a lovely day in June, to stand upon the ramparts of Windsor Castle, and to gaze in mute wonder and rapture over that delicious landscape — the hallowed realm of learning and taste — which environs the stateliest and most majestic of the royal palaces of England. The glory of sunset was fading in the west. The soft and mellow light of the gloaming was just beginning to creep over the emerald velvet of the meadows and the dense foliage of the slumbering elms. Far below lay the quaint city, so beautiful in its carved and timber-crossed antiquity, so venerable with historic association and with martial and poetic renown. At a little distance the “antique spires” and lancet casements of Eton glimmered in the last faint rays of sunset gold. Many church towers, gray and solemn and ancient, were dimly visible on the darkening plains. The old Thames, black and shining, flowed in sweet tranquillity through the peaceful scene. The evening wind was laden with fragrance of syringa and jasmine. Over and around the great central tower of the castle a multitude of birds, warned homeward by impending night, circled with incessant motion and strange, melodious cries. And out from the somber, mysterious sanctity of Saint George’s Chapel, borne tremulous on the perfumed twilight air, came the sobbing organ music of the vesper hymn. In that solemn hour it was

again, and more deeply than ever, impressed upon my mind that the divine privilege of art and the supreme obligation of every intellect engaged in its ministry are to diffuse and to secure for all the people this superb exaltation of the soul—to set upon the familiar face of our every-day lives the immortal seal of spiritual refinement, the sacred radiance of gentleness and beauty.



The Critic.

SPEECH DELIVERED AT A MIDNIGHT SUPPER AT DALY'S
THEATER, NEW YORK, APRIL 13, 1887, COM-
MEMORATING THE ONE HUNDREDTH
PERFORMANCE OF "THE TAMING
OF THE SHREW."

MR. DALY, AND LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

AS I gaze across this red and white and golden morning sea of beauty and behold the radiant faces of this brilliant company I feel that indeed it is a great privilege to be here, and deeply do I wish that any words of mine could adequately express my sense of its value. The card of invitation that came to me bore upon its enticing but delusive front the cheerfully significant legend, "Nothing but sit and sit, and eat and eat." There was no reference to "speak and speak." There was no intimation of the present emergency. You will not believe me when I state that I have nothing to say — but perhaps you may become convinced when I proceed to prove it.

Persons who like myself are beginning to fade into the background of practical affairs receive from time to time little intimations, imperceptible to others but visible to themselves, that they are passing out of remembrance. I should not have been much surprised had I

found myself almost forgotten here ; and when General Sherman, who never disappoints expectation, looked for me in the person of my esteemed friend Marshall Wilder I was not in the least astonished. There is an old yarn about a negro preacher who, holding forth to his sable congregation, spoke somewhat as follows : “ ‘And unto Enoch was born Irad : And Irad forgot Mehujael, and Mehujael forgot Methusael, and Methusael forgot Lamech, and Lamech took unto him two wives and forgot Jabel.’ Now, my beloved bruddren, dis text am meant to show you fustly, dat dem ole patriarchs dey was mighty forgetful.”

But, in sober earnest, I find myself most kindly remembered, and it is with a grateful heart that I thank you for the exceeding grace and good-will with which my name has been mentioned and received. Such an audience might well abash a much more practised speaker. Here sits the illustrious Sherman — “ Our greatest, yet with least pretense ” — destined ever to be remembered among the honored military chieftains of the earth ; here Mark Twain, most characteristic humorist in our land of homely wits and quaint philosophers ; here Wilson Barrett, that well-deserving pillar of the British stage, happily free now from “ the trappings and the suits of woe ” in which he was lately bewildered ; here “ the frolic and the gentle ” Howard Furness, wisest of our American Shakspere scholars ; here Laurence Hutton, chief historian of our stage, wearing his knowledge lightly, like a flower, and already “ a mine of memories ” ; here Lester Wallack, the glorious comedian, keeping bright and pure the

splendid comedy traditions of Wilks, and Lewis, and Elliston, and Charles Kemble, and his renowned and lamented father; here, on every side, the worthies of the stage, the bench, the bar, and the press; and sown among them like stars that glint through the murmuring foliage of a summer night the fair faces and imperial figures of women whom we all admire and love. A royal company! “When comes there such another?” I am rebuked and humiliated when I try to speak in such a presence.

Yet there is a word of tribute that I should like to utter. The whole of Mr. Daly’s career as a theatrical manager, extending through a period of eighteen years, is intimately known to me—for in my professional vocation I have followed him every step of the way. He was scarcely more than a boy when first he unfurled his audacious banner in this dramatic capital. He has had times of disaster and gloom, but he has never flinched nor faltered; he has borne that banner onward through many an hour of conflict and trial, through many a scene of triumph, past many an obstacle of disappointment, and into many a field of victory; and I, for one—not doubting that I have given him abundance of trouble in the course of that time—am proud and happy now to bear my testimony to the fertility of resource, the unerring sagacity, the instant promptitude, the amazing expedition, the incessant energy, the keen knowledge of the spirit of these times, the taste and learning and munificence with which he has exercised his function as a manager; until now he stands enrolled, by the

undisputed virtue of his merit and achievement, among the authentic leaders of the stage — honored and prosperous at home, and known and famed equally on the slopes of the Pacific and in distant Germany, France, and England. We who are assembled here to celebrate the one hundredth performance of "The Taming of the Shrew" have not failed, I am sure, to note the significance of those earnest and generous felicitations with which the younger manager has been greeted by his veteran brother in art. So did Ulysses honor Troilus. In the history of the New-York stage we have arrived at a point where it is easy to forecast the future ; and I think you will understand me when I declare the belief that the scepter which falls from the hand of Lester Wallack will pass, without one word of dissent, one impulse of contest, or one thought of disapproval, into the hand of Augustin Daly.

"The youngest son of Priam ; a true knight ;
Speaking in deeds, and deedless in his tongue."

Some of us at this table pass our lives in writing the record of the acted drama. It is a strange existence. It is a life of many tribulations. It exacts allegiance to high and stern principles of intellectual and moral duty, and at the same time it imposes conditions of physical discomfort and nervous irritation such as the oppressed hod-carrier and the starving seamstress never knew and never would endure. It is a sort of maelstrom of literary destiny, from which no man that once enters it can ever be delivered. I have had nearly thirty years of continuous service in that line

of labor, enduring and discussing all that has been offered upon the New-York stage within that time—and I am still alive to mention it. The weather, the crowds, the vile air, the haste, the anxiety, the midnight drudgery, the newspaper squabbles, the alienated friendships, the cackle of defamatory detraction—I have encountered and endured them all; and, worse than all, that incessant, perennial pest who exists for the sole and single purpose of saying, “What do you think of it?” I know, indeed, what good reason actors have to be dissatisfied with much that is written about their vocation. The American iron-monger who was taken into Stratford Church to see the tomb of Shakspere, and whose friend reproached him for tapping on the altar-rail with his jack-knife, said he was bound to find out whether, in a country having very little iron, the fences were made solid or hollow; and on being reproved for lack of reverence he further stated that the grave of the man who wrote “Damon and Pythias” and “The Lady of Lyons” was a matter of no consequence to him. Much of the dramatic criticism of the day appears to proceed from just that sort of person—or perhaps from such dames as the lady who, on hearing that story, declared with vehemence that some people have no respect even for those great works of Shakspere. But, on the other hand, our period is rich beyond precedent in its intellectual effort to recognize and honor and celebrate the stage. An actor—naturally the most sensitive of all artists, for the sufficient reason that himself and not merely his work is on public exhibition—receives, for

that very reason among others, a greater degree of consideration than is awarded to even the greatest statesman of the century. We who discuss actors and acting walk on anything but roses and couch on anything but down. We must take our fate as it comes. To know the literature of the drama; to discriminate betwixt literature and acting; to see the mental, moral, and spiritual aspect of the stage, and likewise to see the expedient, the popular, even the mercenary aspect of it; to hold the scale true; to write for a great public of miscellaneous readers, and at the same time to respect the feelings and ambitions of artists; to praise with discretion and yet with force, so as to indicate somewhat more than the fervor of an animated clam; to censure without asperity; to think quickly and speak quickly, yet make no error; to check, oppose, and discomfit, on all occasions, the leveling spirit of sordid "business" interest, which is forever striving to degrade every high ideal and mobble it in the ruck of mediocrity; to give not alone your knowledge, and study, and technical skill, but the best power of your mind and the deepest feelings of your heart to the transfiguration and embellishment of the labor of others — this in part it is to work in the groove of the dramatic reviewer. I say it is a painful toil, incessant, arduous, harassing, and framed to try the utmost patience of human nature. But it has its bright side; for, as years speed on and life grows bleak and lonesome and commonplace, it is the stage that gives us our relief from paltry conventionality and iron-bound routine; it is the stage, with its sunshine of humor and its boundless realm

of imagination, that wiles us away from our defeated ambitions, our waning fortunes, the broken idols and wasted hopes of our vanishing youth. What happy dreams it has inspired and fostered! What grand ideals it has imparted and nourished! With what gentle, tender, impassioned friendships it has blessed and beautified our lives!

I know not what is done here to the adventurous person who launches a serious poem into a merry festival. Years ago, when the patriotic spirit of the nation was all ablaze, we happened to have the Italian opera at our Academy of Music, and on one occasion it was thought expedient to introduce "The Star-Spangled Banner" into a performance of "La Traviata," much to the dismay of the sunny children of Italy; and two of the choristers were heard to discuss this portent. "What is it," said one of them, "that I hear of ze bannaire and ze star?" "It is ze Star-Spangle Bannaire! A man named Key write him: and Dan Sickles he shoot him for it—and serve him very well right." I will, however, take the risk, and will repeat a few lines of mine, called "The Signal Light," which perhaps are not inappropriate to the hour and the scene:

The lonely sailor, when the night
O'er ocean's glimmering waste descends,
Sets at the peak his signal light
And fondly dreams of absent friends.

Starless the sky above him broods,
Pathless the waves beneath him swell;
Through peril's spectral solitudes
That beacon streams—and all is well.

So, on the wandering sea of years,
When now the evening closes round,
I light the signal torch that cheers,
And scan the wide horizon's bound.

The night is dark, the winds are loud,
The black waves follow, fast and far,
Yet once may flash, through mist and cloud,
The radiance of some answering star.

Haply across the shuddering deep,
One moment seen, a snowy sail
May glance with one tumultuous leap
And pass with one exultant hail.

And I shall dearly, sweetly know,
Though night be dark and storm be drear,
That somewhere still the roses blow,
And hearts are true and friends are near!

Each separate on the eternal main
We make for one celestial shore;
Sometimes we part to meet again,
Sometimes we part to meet no more.

Ah, friends, make glad the gracious day
When sunshine bathes the tranquil tide
And, careless as a child at play,
Our ships drift onward side by side.

Too oft, with cold and barren will,
And stony pride of iron sway,
We bid the voice of love be still,
And dash the cup of joy away.

No comfort haunts the yellow leaf!
Wait not till, broken, old, and sere,
The sad heart pines, in hopeless grief,
For one sweet voice it cannot hear.

The Actor.

Thought has its throne, and Power its glow,
And Wealth its time of transient ease—
But best of all the hours we know
Are rose-crowned hours that fleet like these.

Let laughter leap from every lip!
To music turn the perfumed air!
Ye golden pennons, glance and dip!
Ye crimson banners, flash and flare!

For them no more the tempest glooms,
Whose freed and royal spirits know
To frolic where the lilac blooms,
And revel where the roses blow.

But lights of heaven around them kiss,
While over silver seas they glide—
One heart, one hope, one fate, one bliss—
To peace and silence, side by side.



The Comedian.

A TRIBUTE TO LESTER WALLACK.

DELIVERED AT A BIRTHDAY FEAST, IN HONOR OF LESTER
WALLACK, AT THE LAMBS CLUB, NEW-YORK,
JANUARY 1, 1888.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN:

IN this distinguished presence, it were, I think, better for me to remain silent than for me to speak; yet, since you will compel me to emerge from the obscurity of silence, I must at least make the endeavor to respond, if not with adequate words certainly with sincere feeling, to your generous welcome. I thank you for the privilege of being present at this festival. I thank you for the surprising kindness with which your chairman's affectionate mention of my name has been received. I was not aware of the existence of so strong a sentiment of favor toward myself among the actors of New-York, who are so largely represented here, and I must be permitted to say that this tribute is in a high degree gratifying to my feelings.

One reason that induced me to accept your thoughtful invitation and come to this place was my desire to do all possible honor to Lester Wallack, your distinguished leader and for many years a dear and cherished

friend of mine. Not that the presence of so humble an individual as I am could confer distinction upon that renowned leader of the comedy stage of America. I never thought that. But it seemed to me that by my presence I might at least express my sympathy and respect, and I had reason to believe that this would not be unwelcome to him. There comes a time in every man's life when the clouds begin to gather and the shadows to deepen around him; when in the secret chambers of his soul the voice of experience whispers its solemn admonition that there is no one whom the world cannot spare. In that somber twilight of decline he naturally turns toward his friends. He is wishful to feel that they remember him and love him; that he still has a place in their hearts, and that he is still recognized and honored in the community to which the labor of his lifetime has been devoted. The least that we can do for a friend, when that hour comes, is to rally around him and take him by the hand.

Another reason that I had for coming hither was my desire to see and hear the representative actors of New-York in the present day. At a time which by many of you must already begin to be regarded as the distant past it was my fortunate privilege to live in association—intimate in some cases, pleasant in all—with many actors who were leaders of the stage, or were conspicuous ornaments upon it; with James W. Wallack, jr., and Edwin L. Davenport, Mark Smith and Humphrey Bland, George Holland and John Sifton, John Brougham and John E. Owens, George Jamieson and George Jordan, Daniel E. Setchell and

Tom Placide, Dolly Davenport and A. W. Young, Barney Williams and Owen Marlowe, John McCullough and Edwin Adams, Edward A. Sothern and William R. Floyd, Reynolds, Norton, Hind, Hanley, Raymond, and many more. They were the companions of my every-day life. They partook of my social pleasures, as I did of theirs. I knew their feelings, their ambitions, their aspirations. One by one those friends have been withdrawn, "to where, beyond these voices, there is peace." To me also time and experience have taught the solemn lesson of vicissitude, evanescence, and resignation. The flowers are still fragrant and the leaves still rustle; but the fragrance is of flowers that have been gathered, and the leaves that rustle no longer hang upon the branches but lie withering upon the ground. In this company to-night I feel like one who has survived from a remote and half-forgotten period, to see the pageant and to hear the music of a new order of things.

And all that I have seen and heard here has impressed and delighted me. Especially am I impressed and delighted by your affectionate appreciation of your distinguished leader. He deserves it all. The character and achievements of Lester Wallack are in a high degree valuable and significant to the members of your profession. He is one of the few remaining actors of the old school who to some extent preserve for our time all that is best in the traditions of the English-speaking stage. He has been an actor during forty-four years—forty of those years in New-York. His career illuminates a far-reaching backward vista in theatrical

history. Looking upon him to-night, remembering the parts that he has played and reviewing the work that he has accomplished, I see in that golden perspective the long and stately line of his dramatic ancestry — the royal figure of Robert Wilks, the magnificent William Lewis, the superb Elliston, the courtly Charles Kemble, the brilliant Charles Mathews, and that illustrious Wallack whose name was his opulent inheritance and whose great reputation he has so worthily maintained. Treading in their footsteps Lester Wallack wears their laurels and transmits their example. It is no common ability and no common devotion which have thus kept alive the sacred flame that was lighted in the great days of Wilks and Cibber, Kynaston and Mountfort, upon the altar of English Comedy.

In one of the old theatrical books there is a record of a remark made by George Frederick Cooke to John Phillip Kemble, in the days while yet they were on good terms with each other: "John," he said, "if you and I were pounded together in a mortar we should not make a limb of a Garrick!" This was the testimony of one of the greatest actors that ever lived — an actor who had seen Garrick and Spranger Barry; an actor who surpassed Henderson; an actor whose genius inspired even so great a man as Edmund Kean — and this testimony was given in recognition of the unrivaled greatness of a comedian. For this, beyond a doubt, was the distinctive royalty of David Garrick, who, in the fullness of his fame, at the summit of his greatness, when at length he retired from the stage, took leave of the public not in a character of tragedy

but in a character of comedy; playing not *King Lear*, in which he had been simply famous, but *Don Felix*, in which he was unrivaled and supreme. These facts point to a conclusion of practical and far-reaching significance. Nobody dreams of depreciating the tragic art or its great professors—the art that implicates *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Richard*; the art that has given to the American stage its Cooper, its Mary Duff, its Edwin Forrest, and its Edwin Booth. But—"Interdum tamen et vocem *Comædia tollit*." The noble actor whom you honor to-night will be remembered by posterity as a great comedian. In the line indicated by such characters as *Sir Oswin Mortland*, *Harry Jasper*, *De Ligny*, *Rover*, *Evelyn*, *Valentine*, *Prosper Couramont*, *Don Felix*, and *Harry Dornton*, he never, in our day, has had an equal. To those who know the literature of comedy this simple statement (which cannot successfully be controverted, and which I am sure no New-York play-goer of ripe experience would think of denying) is a volume in itself.

It is my wish on this occasion carefully to avoid saying any word that might be considered sad or harsh; but I cannot omit to declare my conviction that the retirement of this superb comedian from the active pursuit of the stage is a cause for public sorrow. Wallack's Theater without Lester Wallack at the head of it is no longer an institution—it is the shadow of a name. But it is always the part of wisdom to look the facts of life squarely in the face. When a man comes near the verge of three-score years and ten he is entitled to wish to retire from the responsibilities, the

strife, the tumult, the stress and strain of active conflict in the field of public life. Lester Wallack did not relinquish the control of Wallack's Theater because he was a failure, but because as a manager his work was done. For nearly a quarter of a century succeeding his lamented father's death—in 1864—he conducted that house, and his noble career was now rounded and fulfilled. We are living in a period of change. Every man of conservative ideas and feelings has felt its pressure. The ideas and feelings of Lester Wallack, as to the province of the art of acting and the relation of the stage to society, were probably no longer in practical harmony with the spirit of these times. In my own humble sphere, in the press, I have seen the introduction and gradual prevalence of ideas and customs which fill me with solicitude and dismay. They are, perhaps, right; but if so, all the convictions and practice of my past life have been wrong. I have no doubt that they will prevail. There is now a vast multitude of persons to be amused, and for that multitude the chromo-lithograph has taken the place (although good things are still here and there accomplished upon the stage) of the more valuable forms of dramatic art. "The old order changes," and, one by one, we who cling to ancient views and customs must vanish with the faith to which we cling. I have but a single thought to add, and I will speak it in the words of Tennyson, in his sublime poem of "*Ulysses*"—words which express, with such profound conviction and such noble eloquence, the strength and sufficiency of a resolute will to sustain us against the ills of this mortal

state and make us steadfast amid the shattered and crumbling pageantry of human life and worldly fortune. I should like to think that these words fall from Lester Wallack's lips — here spoken to you by him :

“Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows ; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down ;
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we loved.
Though much is taken, much abides ; and though
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are —
One equal temper of heroic mind
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will,
To strive, to seek, and not to yield.”



Sir Perceval.

READ AT A BANQUET TO LESTER WALLACK,* AT THE
LOTOS CLUB, NEW-YORK, DECEMBER 17, 1887.

I.

WITH a glimmer of plumes and a sparkle of lances,
With blare of the trumpet and neigh of the steed,
At morning they rode where the bright river glances
 And the sweet summer wind ripples over the mead.
The green sod beneath them was ermined with daisies,
 Smiling up to green boughs tossing wild in their glee,
While a thousand glad hearts sang their honors and
 praises,
Where the Knights of the Mountain rode down to
 the sea.

II.

One rode 'neath the banner whose face was the fairest,
 Made royal with deeds that his manhood had done,
And the halo of blessing fell richest and rarest
 On his armor that splintered the shafts of the sun.
So moves o'er the waters the cygnet sedately;
 So waits the strong eagle to mount on the wing;
Serene and puissant and simple and stately,
 So shines among Princes the form of the King!

* John Johnstone Wallack, known to the stage as Lester Wallack, was born on December 31, 1819, and died on September 6, 1888.

III.

With a gay bugle-note, when the daylight's last glimmer
Smites, crimson and gold, on the snow of his crest,
At evening he rides, through the shades growing dim-
mer,

While the banners of sunset stream red in the west.
His comrades of morning are scattered and parted—
The clouds hanging low and the winds making
moan —

But, smiling and dauntless and brave and true-hearted,
All proudly he rides down the valley, alone.

IV.

Sweet gales of the woodland, embrace and caress him!
White wings of renown, be his comfort and light!
Pale dews of the star-beam, encompass and bless him
With the peace and the balm and the glory of night!
And, oh, while he wends to the verge of that ocean
Where the years, like a garland, shall fall from his
brow,
May his glad heart exult in the tender devotion —
The love that encircles and hallows him now!

The Comrade.

AMERICAN AND ENGLISH FELLOWSHIP IN ART.

SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE ANNUAL DINNER OF THE
GREEN-ROOM CLUB, OF LONDON, AT THE CRITERION HALL, PICCADILLY, JUNE 3, 1888.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN:

IN gazing upon this remarkable assemblage of representative Englishmen, many of whom are distinguished—and worthily distinguished—in the great art of acting and in the still greater art of literature, I am deeply penetrated with a saddening sense of my unworthiness to speak in this presence. Left to myself my instinct would have instructed me to remember, with the old poet, that "They also serve who only stand and wait"; and so remembering to remain silent. Since, however, I am not left to myself, since you have done me the great honor to ask me to respond to the pleasant sentiment with which my name has been graciously and gracefully associated, I must at least endeavor to express—what I deeply feel—a grateful sense of your generous favor and kindly consideration. In what way shall that endeavor be made? Phrases of conventional courtesy would be inadequate

equally to your worth and to my profound sense of it. Once, when your illustrious sailor Nelson was in action, fighting the glorious battle of the Baltic, and had occasion to send a despatch to the King of Denmark,—the situation being momentous and the crisis supreme,—he refused to seal that missive with a wafer, but delayed until he could seal it in the old, stately way, with wax; for, said he, this is no time to omit ceremony. Your compliment, as I entirely understand, is not offered especially to me, but in part to that eminent journal across the ocean (*the Tribune, of New-York*), in which for many years I have continuously and zealously labored to advocate that sympathetic alliance between the stage and society which promotes the welfare of both; and in part to your numerous American friends and comrades, absent as well as present, whom I know you are glad to honor, and for whom you are kindly wishful that a few words should be spoken by one of their countrymen. This, accordingly, is no time to omit a thoughtful and earnest consideration of your wishes. One cannot be a Nelson—but one can follow a good example.

It was long ago recorded of your famous orator, Fox, that he once said, when speaking of Pitt and himself as orators, “I can always find *a* word, but Pitt could always find *the* word.” One would be very glad to find *the* word, and to speak it at a moment like this. Perhaps I shall not be far wrong if I say that a significant fact of this occasion is its union of American with English votaries of dramatic art. No fact could be more auspicious for the stage. Great interests of every

kind are implicated in the friendship of the two countries, and nothing surely can be more important than a clear, and right, and sympathetic understanding and alliance between the art communities of the motherland and her now entirely mature, wholly independent, and perhaps somewhat defiant and turbulent child. We, in America, understand you—because affection is clear-sighted, and our love for you makes us wise, at least in this. Do you, in England, wholly understand us?

Only a few days have passed since the clods of the valley were cast upon the ashes of one of the clearest and loftiest thinkers, one of the most sublime and tender poets, one of the noblest and gentlest spirits that ever lived—even in this rich realm, so fertile of genius and renown. In all your hearts the laureled name of Matthew Arnold will at once be whispered. I knew him a little; I loved him much; and here, almost beside his sacred dust, I would speak no word of him except in reverence. Yet it may be said—and, indeed, it ought to be said—that his comprehensive condemnation of America—that ungentle verdict which fell from his pen almost as his pen dropped from his grasp forever—was in a degree mistaken. He told us that our country is uninteresting and that we have produced no literature, and thus, by implication, no art of any kind that is worth consideration. It is a singular judgment; but it may be regarded as a typical manifestation of that part of the current of English critical thought which runs adversely to America: and for that reason it is mentioned now.

Certain things that Arnold said of us are true. America does not possess that delicious charm which is the outward and visible glory of England—venerable, storied, and romantic antiquity, hallowed by pastoral beauty; and if it be meant that the American people have developed more in a material than a spiritual direction that thought is sound and just. The sweet serenity of noble rapture which interfuses the poetry of Matthew Arnold, and which wherever found is the authentic sign of man's spiritual victory over the senses and the world, is not common in America; but then, I believe, it is not common anywhere. Our most dangerous and deplorable characteristic—which he did not mention—is flippant cynicism. I could wish that there were in America more reverence for the ideal, more sincerity of simple, ingenuous human feeling, even at the sacrifice of much enterprise and much humor. But the home life of America, if once you come to know it, is as sweet and pure and true as the home life of England. The fireside and the altar, which are the corner-stones of your English civilization, are as sacred there as here. The love of art, in every one of its forms, is as general and as keen with that people as with this. Your special advantage is that you allow your best national intelligence, your best of brain and heart, to enforce and to protect, silently, sternly, and without appeal, the unwritten law of nobility, refinement, and grace in the daily conduct of social life; not leaving those things to a judgment of the mob nor parading the sanctities of the heart and the hearthstone in news-

papers. We shall reach that in time. Meanwhile, when you talk of literature and art, if Emerson be not a great poet one would like to know who is. If English prose can show a better piece of romantic tragedy than Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter" I should be grateful to make an early acquaintance with it. If man in his relations with elemental nature — man on the wild sea and in the boundless forest — has ever been more truthfully, nobly, and romantically portrayed than in those robust and breezy woodland and ocean stories of Cooper it would be instructive to see the picture. If modern Europe has resounded with a more brilliant and stirring bugle-call of lyrical poetry than that of Whittier it would be inspiriting to catch the echo of it. If Bryant, Dana, Longfellow, Halleck, Poe, Lowell, Holmes, Curtis, Bayard Taylor, Stoddard, Aldrich, and Stedman mean nothing in literature the inquiring mind would like to know wherein literature consists. If actors such as Edwin Forrest, Edwin Booth, Joseph Jefferson, Lawrence Barrett, Richard Mansfield, Charlotte Cushman, Mary Anderson, Clara Morris, and Ada Rehan were not "born in the purple" it might well be asked who were and what the purple means.

Argumentative discussion soon grows tedious. All that I intended was to suggest the fallacy of this adverse English criticism of America. The error consists in an inveterate and unreasonable demand for new forms. That which is said of literature is also said, or is implied, of the stage. Let us see fresh types. Many persons in England have accepted, and have extolled even to the verge of extravagance, one of our authors

—Walt Whitman — for no better reason than because he has discarded all versification and all prose as well, and furnished in their place an unmelodious catalogue of miscellaneous images, generally commonplace and sometimes coarse. That auctioneer list of natural facts and objects, that formless proclamation of carnal appetites and universal democracy, was accepted as grandly original only because it was uncouth. It would appear to be thought that since three thousand miles of ocean roll between the two continents every artist of the western world is under obligation to obey the edict of Sir Anthony Absolute and “get an atmosphere and a sun of his own.” Distinct he should be, whether writer or actor, and he generally is so, in all that constitutes individuality. But surely it ought to be remembered that neither the English language nor the English heart changes because we cross the sea. America is simply bearing onward the standard of art that was first uplifted in England. Almost the whole history of our stage, from John Moody to Henry Irving, is the history of English expeditions westward, leaving English traditions in the new world. So too is it with our literature. Neither ocean, prairie, nor wilderness will ever furnish a poet with a grander instrument or a more copious and noble form of expression than the blank verse of Shakspere and Milton. Insist on superlative excellence in the use of that, if you will; but do not censure us because we do not excell it. Not Polar snows nor blazing Andes will ever provide a greater subject than the human heart, human passions, human life. Poetry is the language

of feeling; acting is the moving picture of nature; and American poetry, American acting, American art, in any and every form, can do no more than to utter, portray, and interpret what it feels. Already, to those who know it well, American art possesses a distinct and valuable character; yet, when all is said, it remains, and always must be, and always will be, and always ought to be, the continuation and kindred sequence of the superb art of England.

And that is why the American votary of art comes as often as he can, in these latter days, into England: because, deep in his soul, a subtle, loving impulse steadily urges him backward, backward, to the fountain of his blood. As on a summer day, in the hot and dusty city, the pale toiler pauses listless at his task and seems to see again the long green fields in which he played as a happy boy, the shimmering branches of elm and willow, the sheep upon the hillside, the drifting summer clouds, the droning bee-hives, the apple-blossoms showering over the peaceful grass, the blue-eyed, brown-cheeked girl who looked into his eyes with perfect trust and gave him his first kiss of love,—so the American pilgrim, reverent of the past and of this great realm from which he sprang, dreamily turns from the din of incessant toil and strife around him, the busy building of the great republic of all the nations of the world, and gladly and sadly lets his thoughts drift back to the dear old mother-land that to him is the home of perpetual romance and beauty. Round it are gloomy seas and over it float forever the changing mystery and pageant of smiling and frown-

ing clouds ; but its heart is all sunshine and love—the love in which we are basking to-night; guests of the Green-Room Club, but not of the Green-Room Club alone ; guests of Shakspere and Burbage, Betterton and Garrick, Kemble and Kean, Mrs. Siddons and Macready, and that whole long line of illustrious actors that ends with the great name of Henry Irving. I can only thank you for the privilege that we enjoy, and for the generous patience with which you have listened to my words. Joy is more joyous to us, in this land of poetry and flowers, than it is anywhere else ; and grief comes more softly to the stricken heart that must endure and wait.



The Tragedian.

A TRIBUTE TO EDWIN BOOTH.

SPEECH DELIVERED AT A MIDNIGHT SUPPER, IN HONOR
OF EDWIN BOOTH, GIVEN BY AUGUSTIN DALY
AND A. M. PALMER, AT DELMONICO'S, NEW-
YORK, MARCH 30, 1889.

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN :

IT was my fortune many years ago to be present in the old Boston Theater on a night when that famous American actor Edwin Forrest, at the close of an exceedingly prosperous engagement, represented *Hamlet* and delivered a farewell address. I can see him now, as I saw him then,—not the most intellectual nor the most brilliant figure in our theatrical history, but certainly the most colossal, the most imposing, the most definite, impressive, inspired animal individuality that ever has been seen upon the American stage; and I can hear his voice as I then heard it, when, as he gazed upon a vast assemblage of the public and upon the stage that was literally covered with flowers, he said—in those magnificent, vibrating, organ tones of his, which never in our day have been equaled—“Here, indeed, is a miracle of culture—a wilderness of roses, and not a single thorn!” To-night it is my fortune to be present at this memorable feast of tribute to genius

and virtue, and to behold his great and famous successor in the leadership of tragic art in America surrounded by friends who greet him with affection no less than homage, and who honor themselves rather than him by every denotement of respect and appreciation they possibly can give to Edwin Booth; and I can imagine that he also, looking upon your eager, happy, affectionate faces, and listening to your genial eloquence—in this scene of light and perfume and joy, of high thought and sweetly serious feeling, and gentle mirth—may utter the same exclamation of grateful pride—"Here, indeed, is a miracle of culture—a wilderness of roses, and not a single thorn!"

For if a man eminent in public life and illustrious in the realm of art may not indulge a sentiment of honest pride and grateful exultation at such a moment as this, I know not when he may indulge it. Honors are sometimes given where they are not due; but, in those cases, although they are accepted they are not enjoyed. In the present instance they flow as naturally and as rightly to the object of our esteem as rivers flow to the sea. Edwin Booth adopted the profession of the stage when he was in his sixteenth year and he has been an actor close on forty years. Looking back upon that long career of ambitious and noble labor and achievement I think he must be conscious—I know that we who have observed and studied it are conscious—that he has been animated in every minute of it by the passionate desire, not to magnify and glorify himself, but through the ministration of a great and beautiful art to stimulate the advancement of

others, to increase the stock of harmless pleasure, to make the world happier and nobler, and to leave the stage a better institution than it was when he found it. Speaking with reference to actors in general, it might perhaps justly be said that it is the infirmity of each one of them to consider himself as the center of a solar system around which everything else in the creation revolves. Not so with the guest of this occasion, the hero of this festal hour — the favorite of our fancy and the comrade of our love! For he “has borne his faculties so meek, has been so clear in his great office,” that whether on the golden summits of prosperity or in the valley of the shadow of loss and sorrow his gentle humility of disposition, his simple fidelity to duty, his solid sincerity of self-sacrificing character and his absolutely guileless and blameless conduct of life have been equally conspicuous with his supreme dramatic genius, his artistic zeal, and his glittering renown. Edwin Booth’s fame is assured, and I think it stands now at its height; and no artistic fame of our generation can be accounted brighter; but the crowning glory of it is the plain fact that an occasion like this—representative to him of the universal sentiment and acclamation of his time—is simply the spontaneous acknowledgment that grateful sincerity awards to genuine worth. My words about him, on another festival occasion in this place, may fitly be repeated now:

Though skies might gloom and tempests rave,
Though friends and hopes might fall,
His constant spirit, simply brave,
Would meet and suffer all—

Would calmly smile at fortune's frown,
Supreme o'er gain or loss:
And he the worthiest wears the crown
That gently bore the cross!

It was not to tell Edwin Booth that he is a great actor, and it was not to tell him that he is dear to the hearts of his friends, that this assemblage has been convened. The burning of incense is a delightful and often a righteous occupation, and of all the duties that your Shakspere has taught there is no one that he urges with more strenuous ardor than that of whole-hearted admiration for everything that is noble and lovely in human nature and conduct. Him, at least, you never find niggard and reticent in his praise. But, as I apprehend it, the motive of this occasion was the desire to express, for our own sake, our sense of obligation to Edwin Booth for the lesson of his life. As the years drift away, as the shadows begin to slope to the eastward, as the first faint mists mingle with the light of the sinking sun, nothing impresses me so much as the imperative need that we should preserve the illusions of a youthful spirit and look upon this world, not in the cold and barren light of fact, but through the golden haze of the imagination and the genial feelings. To some men and women it is granted that they can diffuse this radiant glamour of ideal charm. Like a delicate perfume that suddenly comes upon you from a withered rose, or a bit of ribbon, or a tress of hair, long hallowed and long preserved; like a faint, far-off strain of music that floats on a summer breeze across the moonlit sea; they touch the spirit with a sense of the beauty and glory, the mystery and

the pathos of our existence, and we are lifted up and hallowed and strengthened, and all that is bitter in our experience and sordid in our surroundings is soothed and sweetened and glorified. They teach us hope and belief, instead of doubt and despondency ; and thus, in a world of trouble and sorrow, giving to us the human patience and the spiritual nobility which, more than anything else, we need, they

“Shed a something of celestial light
Round the familiar face of every day.”

It is because Edwin Booth has been in this way a blessing to his generation that we are met to thank him ; and, furthermore, it is because in a period that greatly requires nobility of practical example he is a vital and influential and conclusive proof that an actor may know and may fulfil his duty to his time. What that duty is you will not expect any speaker here to describe. I will but ask you to recall what the American stage was when he came upon it thirty years ago, and to consider what it is now, and to whose influence mainly its advancement is due. And I will but add that when you stand beneath the stupendous majesty of St. Paul’s Cathedral and look upon the marble which commemorates its great architect you may read one sentence that is the perfect flower of simplicity and eloquence—“If you would behold his monument, look around you !”



The Poet.

SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE ANNUAL DINNER OF THE
GOETHE SOCIETY, AT THE HOTEL BRUNSWICK,
NEW-YORK, DECEMBER 9, 1889.

MR. PRESIDENT, AND LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

THE time through which we are passing is a Pagan time—fruitful of material results, almost sterile in spiritual advancement. It may perhaps end in a glorious fruition: let us hope that it will, and let us labor that it may; but in the mean while its fret and fever, its wild and whirling tumult of chaotic force, and its strident vulgarity make it hard to bear. In this period and in this capital, accordingly, the prosperous existence of such an association as the Goethe Society is an auspicious and cheering sign. It means that the service of the intellect and the soul is not forgotten and has not been abandoned. The Goethe Society was not organized for that great educational purpose of the American College, that favorite theme of the fostering American Press—the knocking and kicking of a ball. Your association bears the name of one of the greatest intellectual men that ever lived—the grandest type in literature of the man who is self-made because, by the process of education, he has removed all excess and repaired all deficiency in

himself, till the structure of his being has become symmetrical and perfect. Goethe was a man who did not believe that there is necessarily wisdom in the multitude; he had no faith in government by the many; he did not think that human progress consists in crowning the apex of the social pyramid with the basis of the mob. He was the apostle of the intellect and the soul, and your society, following in his pathway, is consecrated to the service of the ideal, of which his illustrious name is the ample and splendid symbol. It is with deep and grateful satisfaction, accordingly, and at the same time with humble solicitude, in the presence of such a distinguished company, that I endeavor to respond to the sentiment in my honor, so gracefully announced by your President and so graciously received by you.

In the second scene of Goethe's supreme and imperial tragedy there is a moment when Faust and his disciple, standing upon the mountain-side, look down upon the wide and blooming valley — its peaceful cottages nestled in the bright green of glistening foliage and the whole sweet twilight scene slumbering in the rose and gold of sunset. In that delicious moment, so full at once of beauty and of sadness, the worn and weary thinker utters his deep aspiration that he might be permitted forever and forever to follow the sun in its setting — "the Day before me and the Night behind" — and thus always to behold the world, as now, bathed in a supernal light of loveliness and clothed in a celestial garment of peace. The mood is a representative mood. We have all felt it. We are

all conscious of something in ourselves which is higher and nobler than what we reveal. We are all conscious that there is something in the possibilities of human existence better and grander than the life we lead. Every day we live the pressure of material civilization becomes harder and harder. Every day we live the burden of care grows heavier; the tide of sensuality rises higher; the mood of reckless levity becomes more heedless and more bitter; and the glow and the ardor of the spirit droop and wane.

“For each day brings its petty dust,
Our soon choked souls to fill,
And we forget because we must,
And not because we will.”

The wings that lift the mind, says Goethe, cannot lift the body. Yet if the mind be lifted, if the instinct of spiritual life be vindicated and cheered, the man is strengthened for his struggle — which is a struggle for the attainment of a self-centered, pure, and noble individuality, self-reliant, tranquil, gentle, patient in the present and fearless of the future. That refuge it is the poet’s mission — in so far as he may be thought to have a mission — constantly to declare. I do not mean the writer of verses; I mean the expositor of human nature and experience, the interpreter of human destiny. That mission he will fulfil in many ways. Sometimes it is Democritus, who laughs. Sometimes it is Æschylus, who weeps. Sometimes it is Keats, singing in the haunted chambers of imagination, “with magic casements opening on the foam of perilous

seas." Sometimes it is Byron, with his grand organ-note of passionate agony. Sometimes it is Wordsworth, uttering the solemn voice of the mountain and the cloud. Sometimes it is Goethe, voicing the harmonies of the universe and raising the choral hymn of art. Once, and only once, it was the lark that sings at the gate of heaven — the immortal, the unmatchable strain of Shakspere. These and such as these are our comfort in the thorny pathways of the world, as we walk through the valley of the shadow, sometimes in the storm and sometimes in the sunshine, coming no man knows whence and going no man knows whither. They keep alive in us the freshness of our youth; and many a jaded toiler, as he listens to their music, sees again the apple-blossoms falling around him in the twilight of some long-forgotten spring, when the girl of his heart was first clasped to his bosom and the first kiss of love was laid upon his lips.

" Still o'er the scene my memory wakes,
And fondly broods with miser care.
Time but the impression deeper makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear."

Mr. Winter then read the following original poem :

SYMBOLS.

I.

Not to give light alone those urns
Of golden fire adorn the skies !
Not for her vision only burns
The glory of a woman's eyes !
But in those flames and that fine glance
The authentic flags of heaven advance.

II.

In them we know our life divine,
For which the unnumbered planets roll.
Action and suffering are but sign ;
Within the substance dwells the soul ;
And till we rend this earthly thrall
We do not truly live at all.



The Journalist.

A TRIBUTE TO WHITELAW REID.

I.

SPEECH DELIVERED AT A FAREWELL DINNER IN COMPLIMENT TO THE HON. WHITELAW REID, U. S. MINISTER TO FRANCE, AT THE LOTOS CLUB,
NEW-YORK, APRIL 27, 1889.

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN:

I AM deeply sensible of the privilege that you have accorded to me of participating in this festival of honor to Whitelaw Reid, and I should be glad if it were possible for me to respond in the language of eloquence to your cordial and generous greeting. But eloquence is not at my command; and, furthermore, since I have lived for twenty years on terms of affectionate friendship with your distinguished guest—being as it were a member of his household, and perhaps the oldest member of his staff when he was the editor of the *Tribune*—I feel that my place, on this occasion and in this assemblage, is rather with those who listen than with those who speak.

While, however, I cannot be eloquent and certainly cannot be coldly judicial, I can at least be simply true; and, whatever may be the adverse opinion of critical

cynicism, there is no estimate of any man's worth so sound, so just, so righteous, so subtly appreciative, and so irrefragable in its authority as that of the affection which his goodness and his charm have inspired and retained. This hour of tribute belongs, perhaps, exclusively to those observers and speakers who view its object from the impartial distance; and certainly it gladdens my heart to hear their words of praise. Yet, after all, the voice of the fireside, blending gently with more formal panegyric, may touch the strain of your homage with a not unwelcome music. There are many who know, of Whitelaw Reid, that he is a man of brilliant abilities, long conspicuous in a career of splendid public achievement. They have seen, in the undeniably great success of the *New-York Tribune* for the last twenty years, the power of his character, the wisdom of his judgment, the depth of his humanity, the wide grasp of his intelligence, the royal liberality of his enterprise and the invincible stability of his patient courage. But there are not many who can be so keenly aware as I am (because they have not stood so near to him) of the nobility of his mind, the sweetness of his temperament, the gentleness and generosity of his conduct, the magnanimity of his thought, and the purity and simplicity of his life. That is my knowledge of the man whom you have assembled to honor; and these words of mine are not the less thoughtful and authentic because spoken by a devoted personal friend.

There is, I am aware, a certain fantastic, Brutus-like ideal of human conduct, which apparently assumes that the crown and glory of social existence is a gelid,

bloodless insensibility to all the gentler feelings of human nature; and this ideal enjoins that you are never to stand by anybody who happens to be your friend, and that you are never to serve anybody unless it be a stranger or an enemy. To my mind the humor of old Menenius is far more rational; and in all Shakspere I do not recall a more hearty and satisfying aspiration than the glad cry of that bluff old soldier to the victorious Marcius, returning triumphant from his wars:

“A curse begin at the very root of his heart
That is not glad to see thee!”

Enemies, no doubt, are good things. I am always pleased when I hear that certain men in this community have been maligning my name. The man without an enemy is the creature described by Sir Oliver Surface in the comedy, who “has bowed as low to knaves and fools as to the honest dignity of genius and virtue.” But enemies are persons to be ignored: whereas friends, I think, should always be remembered and prospered. It was with great satisfaction, accordingly, that I heard of the appointment of Whitelaw Reid to be the American Minister to France. Public office may derive dignity from its association with the perfect character of a gentleman, but the perfect character of a gentleman can derive no dignity from association with public office. My pride and pleasure in this appointment were not prompted by the thought that Whitelaw Reid had been honored, but rather by a sentiment of exultation that the government of my

country should be wise enough and fortunate enough to appreciate his value and to obtain his service. The rank indeed, in this instance, is the stamp of national approbation — but it is given where it was entirely deserved.

This world, said Wendell Phillips, is divided into two classes—men who do things and men who stand by and grumble because the things are not done in some other way. Your new Minister to France belongs to the former class, and the whole of his intellectual life has been one continual battle for noble principles, high ideals, and the public good. It is not for me, at this time, to pause upon specific details of his career; but there is one passage of it that I will mention. When the great heart and brain of Horace Greeley, broken and despoiled by the ingratitude of the American people, went down in death, there came a dark hour—an hour in which the old *Tribune*, a gallant barque half shattered by the tempest, rolled darkly on a dangerous sea. In that supreme crisis of her peril it was the skill of Whitelaw Reid that righted her; it was his firm hand that lopped away her broken spars and useless cordage; it was his dauntless and steadfast courage that steered her—nobly freighted with the cause and the hopes of the American people—out upon that broad, golden ocean of human progress where she has ever since been speeding, with all her canvas set and all her standards streaming in the blast. The man thus capable of wresting prosperity out of ruin may well be chosen to represent the American Republic in the meridian splendor of the great historic capital of France;

and this nation may well be proud to be represented there by one of the most distinctively American as well as one of the noblest of her sons.

The chronic conventional view of human life steadfastly insists that every man must be circumscribed by his vocation. If you happen to be the editor of a newspaper you must not enter into the service of your country, because if you enter into the service of your country the independence of your newspaper will be paralyzed. That is, all the relations of human society are based upon deceit; you are never sincere except when you complain and denounce; and there can be no such thing as candor except between strangers or foes. No doctrine could be more petty or more pernicious. That man should be ashamed to have a friend who could not at all times receive the truth from his lips, or could not at every proper time pour the truth into his mind. Besides, in the development of an intellectual life there can be no limitation. In one of the books of my boyhood there was a story that much fascinated my imagination, about a youth who attempted, by cutting rests for his hands and feet in the limestone, to climb a little way up the precipitous arch of the great Natural Bridge in Virginia, but who ascended so far that no backward step was possible, and whose only and imperative course was to cut his perilous way onward and upward, till he stood at last safe upon the dizzy summit. So it is with the advancement of an ambitious and noble career. You cannot go backward. As the mind broadens so likewise does the scope of duty. If power and privilege are augmented, so like-

wise is responsibility. And though the horizon were to widen ever so much,

“ Man still would see, . . .
Beyond his vision’s utmost range,
Far regions of eternal change.”

The ultimate consequences of the step that our old friend is now to take are not to be conjectured ; but we, who know him so well, know that he will go forward from one conquest to another — because he was born for victory and not defeat. Nothing in the world is so precious as opportunity ; nothing in life so important as the right improvement of it. His life, guided and swayed by this truth, will be free from error in the future, even as it has been in the past. Equally in joy and in sorrow, therefore, we bid him farewell. We can all join in this good-by. We can all pray that Heaven may bless his footsteps, wherever they turn. And, finally, we can all echo the solemn and tender words of the old Hebrew poet :

God stand between me and thee while we are absent one from another !



II.

SPEECH DELIVERED AT A DINNER AT DELMONICO'S,
N. Y., MAY 3, 1889, GIVEN BY THE EDITORIAL
STAFF OF THE N. Y. TRIBUNE, IN COMPLI-
MENT TO THE HON. WHITELAW REID,
U. S. MINISTER TO FRANCE.

MR. PRESIDENT, AND COMRADES AND FRIENDS:

THOUGH it be true, in the exquisite words of Shakspere, that "silence is the perfectest herald of joy," certainly it is equally a truth that silence is the consummate eloquence of sorrow. Both these feelings, blended here and now, do but imperfectly prompt to speech. This occasion, impressive in many ways, is chiefly impressive by its absolute, perfect, and touching simplicity, and I know that I cannot speak of such a moment as this in a manner adequate to its gentle and lovely spirit or to the deep emotion with which it is regarded by you. This is a festival of separation, and in this uncertain world every separation, however transient and temporary, becomes pathetic to a thoughtful mind, because it prefigures that inevitable and final separation when we are parted to meet no more. That is why "greeting ever smiles and farewell goes out sighing." The honored leader under whose guidance we have so long and so happily labored in our profession, some of us for many years, will lead us no longer. The dear and cherished friend with whom we have lived in so much harmony and contentment — some of us on terms of affectionate intimacy, all of

us in esteem and kindness — will cease from this night to be our companion. We have asked him to come here, accordingly, and we have assembled around him now, in order that we may try to tell him how deeply, for our own sake, we regret his departure ; how constantly and with what earnest good-will our thoughts will follow him across the sea ; and with what a tender remembrance his name will be cherished in our hearts. The word for such a moment is obvious, and there are speakers, no doubt, who could easily utter it. We can all say "good-by." We can all exclaim, in Shakspere's music, " May all the number of the stars give light to thy fair way." We can all murmur the solemn and tender aspiration of the old Hebrew Bible, " God stand between me and thee while we are absent one from another." There is a deep and serious and abiding significance in those simple words. They reach far and they cover much. And yet I think that we — his professional associates, his old friends and comrades, the soldiers who have served under his banner and fought by his side — are conscious that something would still remain unspoken which ought to be spoken, if we were only and simply thus to say farewell. The moment is one for words of sorrow and for words of joy, but also it is one for words of honor. There is a chaplet of laurel for Whitelaw Reid that should be woven for him now in your presence ; yet as I stand here to-night, in term of continuous service the oldest member of the *Tribune* editorial staff so lately his — certainly one of his oldest friends — abounding and rejoicing in gentle

memories of an affectionate friendship of twenty years — I may say, with the old poet :

“ It should be mine to braid it
 Around his honored brow,—
But I ‘ve in vain essayed it,
 And feel I cannot now.”

In that entralling scene of sable splendor which closes the sublime experience of *Hamlet*—when the last smile has just faded from his beautiful face and his weary heart at length rests from its long trouble—while yet the lovely farewell words of *Horatio* are trembling in the air—“Good night, sweet Prince! and flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!”—suddenly, to the sound of drums and trumpets, glittering in golden armor and canopied with victorious banners, stands forth the resplendent figure of *Fortinbras*, triumphant and potent and superb. By that pathetic and eloquent pageant the great poet marks for us, with his imperial touch and his immortal color, the contrast between the man of dreams and the man of deeds. Myself a dreamer all my life, and standing now in the shadow and among the fallen leaves, I view with ever increasing gratitude and delight the victory and prosperity of the man of action. Philosophy should do no injustice to that superb type of manhood and of practical force. No doubt it is a world of strife and tumult in which he lives; but it would be a world of drift and chaos without him. You can muse in security and peace over your Montaigne and your Emerson, because you have had your

Washington and your Grant. The career of Whitelaw Reid—a career of intellectual and of practical labor, as a man of action, extending over a period of more than thirty years—has been one incessant warfare for human rights; and at no moment of it has he neglected to advocate any and every idea tending toward the advancement of the human race. As the animating and guiding and controlling spirit—the brain and the heart—of a great public journal, he has displayed in marvelous affluence the capacity of comprehending every condition of contemporary experience, and of entering into every noble aspiration of the actual life of his time. To do this, and to confer upon all these aspects of general vitality and of individual character the utterance of picture and of voice—so that, whether their result be failure and ruin or victory and renown, every phase of humanity shall be shown exactly as it is in its struggle—is to be a great journalist; and such a journalist is Whitelaw Reid. Nobody can wonder that such a man should be chosen to represent the American Republic in one of the highest and most important diplomatic stations in Europe; and nobody can doubt that he will represent the Republic there with the same calm wisdom, the same affluent and splendid ability, the same intrepid spirit, and the same unerring taste and grace and refinement that have marked the whole of his career.

Our sorrow is that we lose his guidance and companionship. Our joy ought to be that the seal of national approval and admiration is set upon our leader and comrade—that the verdict of our love and our judg-

ment (although we did not need such a tribute and should esteem and cherish him just as much without it) has been ratified by the sentiment of the nation. And our joy should likewise be that a man with faculties so ripe and so superbly trained, and with a nature so receptive to every broadening and ennobling influence of high thought, pure art, and a beautiful civilization, should find the field of his mental activity growing wider and wider, under the happiest auspices of ever fresh experience. No fact of life is more absolute and decisive than that of the gradual but sure isolation of the man of high intellect from the primrose paths of peace and repose. Sometimes, from his mountain height, he may look down with longing eyes into the smiling valley of contentment and rest; but contentment and rest are not for him. His place is the place of danger and vigil. He is the true "watcher on the threshold," the sentinel on the ramparts of the new age, and into his hands are committed the destinies of his race. There is no other pathway for our friend than that pathway of circumstantial diversity and intellectual growth; and it ought to make us proud and happy to behold him thus advanced and illustrious, playing a great part, and worthy and able to play it, and to play it greatly, upon a most brilliant theater of modern civilization.

Once, at a time now seemingly far distant, it was my privilege and my happiness, in the mellow moonbeams of a beautiful summer night, to stand upon the summit of the Shakspere Cliff, at Dover, and to gaze for a long while, in voiceless reverie, upon that gaunt, mysterious coast and that romantic, shining sea. Overhead the

great constellations hung in the dark blue heaven and among them the full-orbed moon kept her imperial state. Far to the left frowned the somber castle, lonely on its sequestered crag. Beneath nestled the ancient, historic city, sleeping in the moonlight. The winds were hushed. The waves were still. A few ships, floating in the Channel, like spirits seen in dreams, drifted now and then out of the shadow, glimmered a moment across the silver track of the moon, and lapsed into darkness. And far away to the southward I saw for the first time the flash of the watch-fires on the shore of France. It would be long—it would be impossible—to tell the thoughts that made that hour forever glorious and memorable in my life; but mingled with them all was the inspiring consciousness of looking, at last, upon the land of roses and of song, the land of love and wine, the land that was my country's friend when most a friend was needed. France has always been dear to the hearts of Americans. She will be dearer than ever to us now because her bosom will enshrine the loved and honored friend to whom this night we say farewell.

I.

Because in danger's darkest hour,
When heart and hope sank low,
She nerved our frail and faltering power
To brave its mightiest foe;
Because our fathers smiled to see
Her golden lilies dance
O'er the proud field that made us free,
We plighted our faith to France !

The Actor.

II.

Ah, grand and sweet the holy bond
 That who gives all is blest !
 And Love can give no pledge beyond
 The life she loves the best !
 That pledge these hallowed rites declare
 Of choice and not of chance,—
 And he shall cross the sea to bear
 Our loyal hearts to France !

III.

Strong, tender, gentle, patient, wise,
 Brave soul and constant mind,
 True wit, that kindles as it flies
 And leaves no grief behind,—
 Be thine to wear the snowy plume
 And poise the burnished lance—
 Our rose of chivalry, to bloom
 Among the knights of France !

IV.

Be thine the glorious task to speed
 The conquering age of gold—
 Till ravaged peace no more can bleed,
 And History's muse behold
 Borne in the vanward, fast and far,
 Of the free world's advance,
 Blent with Columbia's bannered star,
 The triple stripes of France !



The Friend.

EULOGY UPON HENRY EDWARDS.*

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE FUNERAL OF HENRY
EDWARDS, COMEDIAN, AT 185 EAST 116TH
STREET, NEW-YORK, JUNE 11, 1891.

I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me : Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors ; and their works do follow them.

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.

Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them.

For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

THE Bible belongs not to the Church, but to the world. In those touching words which are taken from it—words which are inspired, precisely as the words of Shakspere are often inspired, with the glow

* Henry Edwards, comedian, was born at Ross, in Wales, September 3, 1824, and died at No. 185 East 116th Street, New-York, on the night of June 8, 1891. He was an actor almost all

and the grandeur of imaginative insight—the old Hebrew poet has expressed the conviction of personal immortality and of an existence of happiness beyond the grave which is at once the consummate product and the sustaining impulse of the human mind.

If the voice that here is hushed forever could but speak in these obsequies, if the eyes that here are closed in death could but look upon this scene, the faith that we all ought to cherish would be made a living word; the hope that ought to sustain us would be flashed into every heart. In the religion of creed and dogma—in what is called “revealed religion”—meaning thereby the religion which depends upon printed documents and which might be seriously imperiled, if not overthrown, by typographical mistakes—the friend for whom we mourn did not put his trust. He was, nevertheless, a deeply religious man. He knew that the intuitions of the human soul, the analogies of nature, and the testimonies of literature (which is the highest expression of humanity) point to one and the same conclusion, personal immortality and

his life. In New-York he was associated with Wallack’s Theater, from November 7, 1879, to 1887. His last appearance on the stage was made, with Mr. Daly’s company, at the Academy of Music, Brooklyn, April 30, 1891, as *Adam* in “As You Like It.” He particularly excelled in the line of old men. He was the author of a book of sketches and addresses entitled, “A Mingled Yarn.” It was by his wish and the request of his widow that the funeral services over his remains were conducted by me. His body was taken to the crematory at Fresh Pond, Long Island, immediately after the funeral and there incinerated.

continuous, unending development. He knew that to be the logic of the universe. He believed that, and he lived in accordance with his belief. Purity, charity, kindness, and noble aspiration were the laws of his life.

In a conversation about actors and their religious views that I once had with the Rev. Dr. Bellows, he spoke especially of Joseph Jefferson, in whose character and art he was deeply interested, and he asked me this question : "Is he a Christian ?" "He is not," I replied, "a member of any Christian church, but he has passed his life in helping other people and in doing good." And the Rev. Dr. Bellows answered : "That is the best kind of Christian and good enough for me."

I wish that I could say anything that would give even a little comfort to the heart-broken woman who here mourns for her lover, her husband, her friend, her companion of many years, whom in this world she will see no more. We would all comfort her if we could. But all that we can tell her is that we also loved him and that our tears are mingled with hers. We know, and we would beg her to remember, not only that he was tender and loving, but that always, in every hour of their wedded life and love, she was a comfort and blessing to him. No duty was left undone by her, no word of love unspoken, no kindness unbestowed. She must weep for him because she loved him, and because he is parted from her. But she is spared the most desolate of all sorrow — the remorseful, hopeless, bitter grief that brings its withering roses and its useless tears to a gravestone.

I wish that I could express the feelings of these mourning friends, their grief for the loss of this good man, their deep sense of his nobility, his splendid talents, his worthy achievements in art and literature and science, his potent excellence as an example, his charm as a comrade, his simple dignity and his fidelity and sweetness. But no words are adequate in such moments as this to the craving of love and honor for eulogy of the dead. Let me simply say that the reasons we have for pride in the remembrance of Henry Edwards are reasons for our consolation in the loss of him. He was not cut off in the morning of his days, with all the happiness and renown of a good and great life unrealized and unachieved. He had lived almost to the usual limit of human existence. Born near the birthplace of David Garrick, he early evinced a deep sympathy with the dramatic art, of which Garrick still remains the most illustrious representative. While yet a youth he drifted to Australia and there formally adopted the profession of the stage. From Australia he drifted to California, constantly prospering as actor, orator, and scientist, prospering ever more and more in his conquest of the esteem and affection of gentle people. From California he came to this Atlantic seaboard, and here he took and steadily held, in the highest of our theaters, his professional rank with the foremost and the best. Not a creative actor, but rather the product of scholarship and tradition, he represented not the original genius of the stage, but its versatile proficiency and fine conservatism. He did not astonish and dazzle; he satisfied. His attributes were

intellectual character, taste, humor, and tenderness, and the blended charm of these was enhanced by a dignified personality and by that fine distinction of manner which is the flower of innate simplicity and courtesy. His career of more than sixty years marks the ample development of his character and the beneficent, beautiful, and admirable fulfilment of his destiny. All that it was in him to accomplish had been accomplished. His work in this world was done, and his long life—blessed with love, rewarded with success, and crowned with honor—was without one blemish. What richer legacy than that could talent and virtue leave to bereaved affection and faithful memory!

Equally in life and in art success is dependent on sincerity and sympathy. Henry Edwards was genuine and human. I do not suppose that any one to whom he was known ever thought of him without a sudden feeling of kindness and pleasure. The mention of his name always brought a smile. Twenty-two days ago I clasped his hand for the last time. He was at once to go away and we were to meet no more. I remember—and I rejoice to remember—that he produced upon my mind then the self-same impression that he had produced at every meeting between us during the many years of our friendship—the impression of absolute goodness, benevolence, simplicity, and truth. He was a man whom it was natural to love, for every impulse of his heart was an impulse of kindly interest in the welfare and happiness of others. And now that the smile is frozen on his face, now that the cheery voice can speak no more, now that the kind hand will never

be stretched forth again in greeting, our way grows lonely and cold.

“ His memory long will live alone,
In all our hearts, as mournful light
That broods above the fallen sun
And dwells in heaven half the night.”

In the awful presence of death all vanity is rebuked, all pride becomes humility, all the greatness of the world is a mist that drifts away. Let us endeavor, while there is yet time, to learn the lesson of our bereavements, to look at death as a great and solemn fact. It draws nearer and nearer to each one of us every hour we live. “ Man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets.”

There is no more but this. “ Earth to earth. Ashes to ashes. Dust to dust.”

“ Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace !
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,
While the stars burn, the moons increase,
And the great ages onward roll.”





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